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# Best Bets

THE POST-HERALD ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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## ART SCENE

### Audubon prints land in Mountain Brook library

#### AUDUBON AND OTHER RARE NATURAL HISTORY PRINTS.

Emmet O'Neal Library, Crestline Village, Mountain Brook. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. today-Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. Free. For more information, call 531-3973 or visit [www.antiquenatureprints.com](http://www.antiquenatureprints.com).



Special to the Post-Herald

Rare Audubon prints, such as this one of an oyster catcher, will be for sale this weekend at Emmet O'Neal Library in Mountain Brook.

A lifesize great heron. A lifesize flamingo. A lifesize wild turkey.

These birds are not alive, nor are they a product of taxidermy.

They have been printed from painstakingly etched copper plates and hand-watercolored, made from 1827 to 1838. Only about 119 full sets of the prints exist today, which include 435 pictures of birds.

Queen of England Adelaide Saxe-Meiningen (1792-1849)

owned the almost-complete set on display this weekend at Emmet O'Neal Library in

Mountain Brook. She reigned from 1830 to 1837.

They're for sale individually.

from \$4,000 up to \$20,000 at the exhibit. Hundreds of other rare prints will be on display, as well, said J. Gilbert Johnston Jr. of Mountain Brook, a member of the American Historical Print Collectors Society. As an art dealer, he owns this set of prints.

The prints were restored to the Saxe-Meiningen family only recently after a wild history; Johnston bought them at auction this summer in New York.

Queen Adelaide was one of the first subscribers to John James Audubon's "Birds of America."

The print publisher used such subscriptions to pay for the high cost of producing the prints. The queen paid more than \$1,000 for this set in 1827, Johnston said.

Upon her death, the prints ended up in a German castle

belonging to her family. During World War II, supporters hid the prints in caves to survive the Nazi occupation.

The East German police eventually did seize them; only in the past few years have they been returned to the family, Johnston said.

A complete set of 435 prints sold for \$8.8 million in March 2000, Johnston said.

The queen's set of prints are rare in that they were never bound like the 119 complete existing volumes of the prints. They look like they did when they came off the print plates; the queen stored them unbound, Johnston explained.

"They're unique in so many ways," Johnston said.

— Leigh Anne Monitor / Birmingham Post-Herald

## BMA reopens with new exhibits

By LEIGH ANNE MONITOR  
BIRMINGHAM POST-HERALD

The Birmingham Museum of Art reopens its doors this weekend with hundreds of surprises.

Those surprises are many pieces of new art to see from many artistic eras in distinctive styles. The museum will feature four changing exhibitions opening Sunday, from antique Middle Eastern rugs to art made with recent trash from the side of the road.

The range of the new exhibits offers something for everyone, said Jim Sokol, a member of the museum's